1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Chapter Two

THE SNOWBALL STATE

1. Manipulation 2. Age-sets 3. Officers of State 4. Continually segmenting systems 5. Lineage systems compared 6. Splitting the State 7. Stability

1. *Manipulation*

IN OUR first chapter we outlined some of the more significant events in Ngoni history prior to the arrival of Europeans. In this chapter we shall examine the political system within which these events took place. It is not the task of social analysis to determine why these or any other events occurred. What we shall attempt is a discussion of how they occurred, and what were the principal social relations involved in them.

Most of the incidents referred to in the first chapter concerned the State as a whole or the royal family. Nevertheless, when we begin to consider the conditions under which the State endured we have to discuss the social position of ordinary men and women within the State. For the Ngoni State held together as an organized social group, and on occasion failed to hold together, not merely because Zwangendaba was a good leader or his sons quarrelsome or his brothers ambitious, or because his people were bound by custom and knew no better, but also, and in our view mainly, because the State was a viable social entity in its time and place. The arrangement of people into segments and age-sets was not a mere formal and static division, but a means whereby a motley heterogeneous collection of individuals was converted into an organized society with agreed aims. The structure of the State had rules; in other words there was regularity in its social processes. Yet it was a structure which, within these rules, could be manipulated. The structure could be, and was, utilized by individuals for the realization of their private ends at the expense of others as well as providing for the common good. This is probably true of all social systems. We shall begin our analysis by examining the ways in which this manipulation was carried out.

In most societies, from the simplest system of hunting bands to the complex societies of the modern world, one of the most significant sets of rights are those relating to fixed natural resources. The structure of rights in land provides a key to the structure of society.

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society. This was not so among the Ngoni. We know little about the way in which rights in cultivated and grazing-lands, hunting-rights and rights to water were distributed in the old Ngoni State, but if the present position is any guide, it seems likely that there was no well-developed system of land-holding. After dwelling in any one area for five years or so, the tribe moved on, partly because the fertility of the soil had been exhausted and partly for other reasons. Thus rights to land did not endure; land itself was expendable. What endured was merely the pattern of residential settlement, the arrangement of people in clusters and divisions and villages. Men and women lived where they belonged in the segmentary residential system, and relative geographical position did not determine, but was determined by, political affiliation.

Power in the State was thus power over people rather than over natural resources. It is true that cattle were valuable, but even they appear to have been eaten rather more often than in many tribes in which cattle are a form of wealth and investment rather than a regular item of diet. Furthermore, there was the doctrine that all cattle belonged to the Paramount Chief, so that village headmen with cattle in their byres held them, as it were, only by favour of the chief. The principal index of power was the number of a man's dependants. Political struggles were essentially not struggles to control wealth but to enjoy the support of followers. The main source of dependants was from raiding, and hence the allocation of captives was crucial to the working of the social system.

Fraser writes of the northern Nyasaland Ngoni, that warriors kept their own captives.[1] This does not seem to have been the usual procedure among the Fort Jameson group. Although some informants spoke as if they, or their forebears, had been actually taken by the person who became their lord, others said that in general all captives belonged to the Paramount Chief, and that he could allocate them as he wished; usually, however, he allocated them to the warriors who had captured them. It was a specific privilege of regional governors to keep their own captives. It seems probable that the Paramount Chief's allocations were made to the heads of segments to which the warriors belonged, for many of my informants were said to have been captured by a few people, some of whom are described by contemporary travellers as generals and war-leaders, and who are unlikely to have made many front-line captures themselves. Moreover, it seems that on small raids organized by the head of a major segment, not on a national scale,

[1] Fraser, *Primitive people*, p. 37.

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effort to induce them to co-operate actively with the government, and by 1910 he was looking forward to reducing the number of White officials in the Administration by devolving much of the Native work on to the Natives themselves. Co-operation was encouraged by the payment of small stipends to chiefs and others, varying in the 1920s in annual value from £22 10*s.* 0*d.* for Mpezeni down to 6*s.* for district messengers.

The Ngoni for the most part neither supported nor opposed this scheme of administration; they merely accepted it. For years the Administration bemoaned the indifference of the Ngoni, but apart from an attempt by a mission to set up its teachers as headmen, there was little attempt to obstruct the work of the Administration.

In matters of land, the authority of the Whites was also dominant, but here the paternal amiability which characterized purely political relations between Administration and Ngoni was lacking. The alienation of land was at the instigation of the North Charterland, who considered themselves the owners of Ngoni country. Fort Jameson was built by the Administration in the middle of Ngoni country and the land round the township, few facilities though the town then had, became more valuable to potential settlers than more fertile but inaccessible tracts. The high density of population in Ngoni country also attracted settlers with the prospect of an adequate labour supply. Thus we find that many of the first tracts of land alienated were located in the middle of Ngoni country, in the most densely populated section. As early as 1 January 1904 the first Commission was appointed to inquire into land questions in Ngoni country.[15] Now that Ngoni had to grow their own food on land which had already been heavily exploited the density of population fell; but in relation to the carrying capacity of the land in perpetuity there was still serious overcrowding. During the unsettled period of the war and its aftermath, the population was dispersed, but from 1900 down to about 1930, in consequence of alienation and the formation of reserves, villages were gradually brought closer together. From 1930 onwards, with the recognition of land shortage by the Administration, villages have been allowed to spread out again. The negotiations concerning where the Ngoni should live have been protracted and complicated; I hope to discuss them in a later work in connexion with the economic background of Ngoni social life. What is here significant about them is that to a very large extent these negotiations have been carried on entirely by Whites, with the Administration representing for the greater part Ngoni

[15] *N.E.R.G.G.*, ii, 1 (1 January 1904), pp. 30-1.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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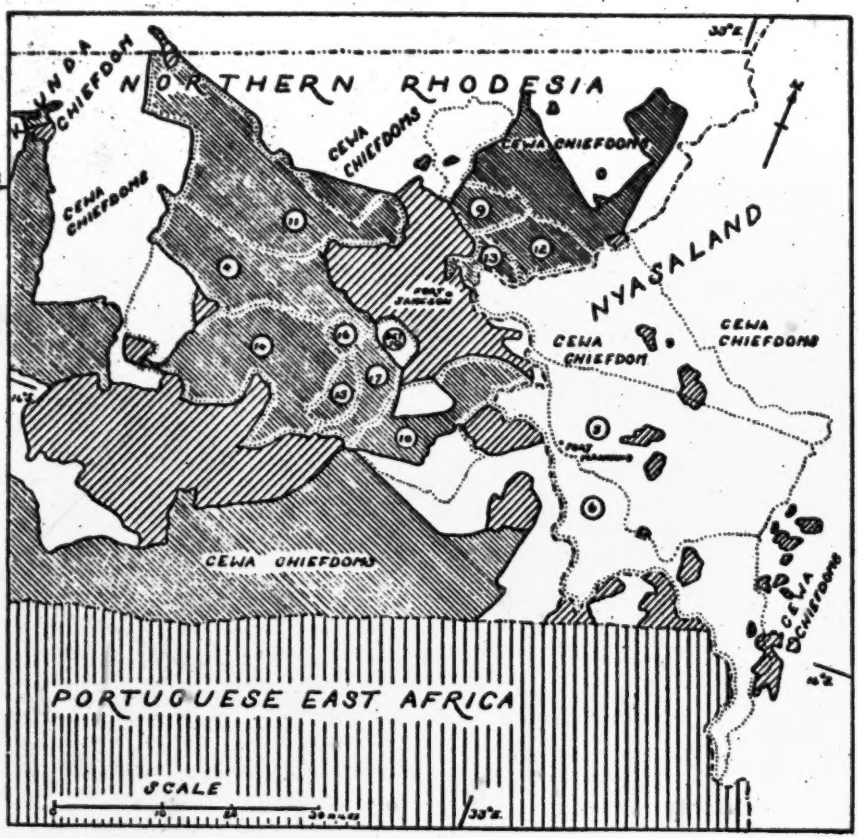
102
423
631
439
634
101

Map D. STATUTORY DIVISION OF LAND, FORT JAMIESON 1949



International Boundary.

N. Charterland Concession, Northern Boundary.

Statutory Division Boundary.

County Boundary.

Farmland in non-African ownership.

Native Reserves.

Native Trust land, crown land and disputed land, treated as if it were Native Trust land.

Portuguese East Africa.

County numbers.

[p. 120]

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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593 brew beer when her husband asks her. In addition to this minimal amount of required co-operation, in many instances husband and wife have a great deal in common. They may go to church or visit a relative, or even go together to a beer party.

The obligation on a man to clothe his wife is the most clear-cut and obvious duty in marriage. It is the failure to clothe that is [586] usually cited as evidence of desertion when a woman seeks a divorce. There is no specific standard to which he must clothe her, but she usually insists that she is not to be more poorly clad than are her 291 neighbours. Clothes consisted in the old days of skins and barkcloth, [177] but cloth was introduced by Arabs before the Europeans arrived, and was used as a form of currency by the early European settlers. A few people still wear skins, but only on top of Western clothing. [986] There is no indigenous weaving, and all clothes have therefore to be bought in the shops.

342 The man takes the initiative in finding a hut in which he and his 356 wife live, and it is he who undertakes the major work of repair. 462 Houses, if made of bamboo, last for about twenty years, but require rethatching, while pole and mud huts last about eight years only. When a couple begin to live together they usually borrow an empty hut in the village, asking the man or woman who is looking after the hut if they can move in. No charge can be made for the loan of a [591] hut. If the marriage begins uxorilocally, and the woman has previously been living in a dormitory, she may ask the other girls in the dormitory to go and sleep elsewhere until her husband can build her a hut of her own. The man does the work of marking out the site, digging the foundations, cutting the trees for the framework, and so on. All these are men's jobs, and he may be assisted in the work by his male neighbours and relatives. His wife gathers thatching grass, but the men do the actual thatching. The finishing of the house is entirely the wife's work, and she usually gets her friends and relatives to help her plaster the walls and floor. The maintenance of the plaster remains her responsibility and she ought to renew the floor every month after she has menstruated.

593 Every wife ought to have her own garden, and, sooner or later, 423 her own storehouse. Most young people acquire gardens of their 291 own long before they marry, but continue to pool the produce of the [343] garden with the adult responsible for feeding them. This arrangement continues after marriage, and the incoming spouse at first merely assists in the garden of the other and is fed from the common storehouse of his or her parents or relatives. If a woman has been 591 living with her grandmother and her husband comes to live with her, 291 the couple draw on the wife's grandmother's storehouse for their food, 343 and place the produce of the wife's garden in it. Similarly, in virilocal marriage, a woman may at first help in her husband's garden and draw from his mother's storehouse. But after a year or two, if a man is not to be despised as a sluggard, he must build a storehouse in the village where they have settled, and see that there is

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

village to another. An indication of the relative frequency with which different types of marriage residence occur is given by Table XIII. This table is based on all the extant marriages involving the 98 married men whose wives were known and the 175 married women, as shown in Tables III and IV. A distinction is made in Table XIII between those marriages in which the man lived with his wife or in a village near her and those in which the man was effectively absent.

We may now assess the relative frequency of virilocal and uxorilocal residence by extracting those marriages falling into either one or other of these residential categories and by then dividing the number of virilocal contracts by the number of uxorilocal. This is done in Table XIV.

It will be seen that although there were three marriages in which both spouses lived virilocally for every one in which they both lived uxorilocally, this preponderance of virilocality was reversed in those marriages in which the man was absent. There were approximately three wives who lived uxorilocally while their husbands were away for every two who lived virilocally. This difference between the ratios in the two parts of the sample is not likely to have arisen as a chance result and may be regarded as definitely associated with the whereabouts of the husband.

On the basis of these figures we may continue to call the Ngoni a virilocal rather than an uxorilocal people, but it is evident from the last column of Table XIII that virilocal marriages amount to slightly less than half (47·3 per cent) of all extant marriages. It should also be remembered that by no means all of the couples we have classified as virilocal were living in the village of the man's father. We have included in this category all marriages in which the man had definitely stronger ties to the other inhabitants of their village than had his wife. Our definition of the uxorilocal category is similar and not all uxorilocal couples were living in the woman's mother's village.[8] A more detailed examination of the frequencies with which these different kinds of marriage residence occur will be attempted elsewhere.

We have already noted that a man who goes to live in the village of his bride takes on the care of her garden and works in it with her. The produce of the garden is pooled with whoever was looking after the bride, and the young couple draw their food from this common store.[9] A man who does not intend to stay long in his wife's village will usually try to keep his own garden under cultivation near his own village and when he takes his wife back to his village he reverts to his own garden as his main source of supply. If the two villages are a long way apart this may not be practicable, or the man may find it irksome to keep two gardens going, and may lend his own to someone else on the understanding that he will be wanting it back

[8] See below, pp. 75f.
[9] See above, p. 42.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 94--ANALYST]

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

after a year or so. If he keeps it going himself he visits his own village for a week or two at a time to tend the garden, and stores the produce with a relative in the village. If, however, a man intends to reside for many years in his wife's village, he gives away his garden and concentrates his labours in his wife's garden. After a year or two he builds her a storehouse in her village and the couple begin to keep their own supplies separate from those of her relatives.

Even when the couple have their own storehouse it is considered proper if from time to time they are given maize by their parents. If a woman living virilocally goes to visit her parents and relatives and returns without maize or flour her husband's relatives are likely to laugh at her and say 'She must come from a very poor family'.

Uxorilocal residence is described by the vernacular term *cikomwene*. In its most general usage this word refers to the obligations a man owes to his wife's parents, particularly at the beginning of his marriage. It has three specific meanings:

(i) Uxorilocal residence.

(ii) Assistance rendered from time to time by a man in his wife's mother's garden.

(iii) A hoeing party of men and women from the man's village which works in his wife's mother's garden.

Uxorilocal residence is classed with these other two aspects of affinal obligation and like them it can be avoided completely, shirked, or executed in full. The extent to which the obligations are fulfilled

Table XIV. Virilocality and Uxorilocality, 1948-9

Wife's residence	Husband's residence		Total
	Rural	Away	
Virilocal ..	72	14	86
Uxorilocal ..	24	20	44
Total	96	34	130
Ratio of virilocal to uxorilocal wives	3	0·7	1·95
Association between husband's residence and wife's residence $\chi^2 = 12{\cdot}83$ $P < {\cdot}001$			
Informants as in Table XIII			

5
4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

as one from a graded segmentary society organized on a basis of patrilineal descent and modified by political promotion to a society of villages organized on a basis of omnidirectional kinship. In the past a man lived in the same place as his father and in charge of the segment allocated to him by his father. Now a man lives where he can find relatives of one kind or another who may be related to him agnatically, cognatically, affinally, or by any combination of these ways. He is not even restricted to consanguineal relatives, as in cognatic kinship systems, for he can affiliate himself to some person who is linked cognatically neither to him or to any of his potential descendants, as when he goes to live with his father's wife's mother's brother. Genealogical connexion can be traced along all possible paths and there are no mechanisms by which one path is automatically favoured or by which the length of a path is restricted. In consequence the genealogical constitution of any local group of relatives is complex, and every man is a potential recruit to many local groups. He selects between the numerous possibilities open to him on the basis of his own inclinations and in response to the various pressures exerted on him by his siblings, his parents, his wife, her parents, and others. Once he has made his choice he can always change his mind and move elsewhere if he finds his neighbours irksome. His wealth, either in cattle or money, is his own and he can take it with him when he moves. There are no rights in land (with the one exception of dry season gardens) which might otherwise tie him to one particular spot. As with residence, so with marriage payments, the formal and informal procedures of marriages, and the values associated with them. In all, considerable variation is tolerated. Indeed, we may well regard variation as a necessity in this system, for every man is subject to a mass of potential conflicting claims and he cannot possibly honour them all simultaneously. Variation occurs not because of different practices by various sections of the population but rather because of different individual decisions. A man decides for himself whether or not he will pay bridewealth, or take a hoeing party to his wife's mother's garden, or be suspended from the sacraments for marrying a second wife. Yet although he makes these choices himself, he is all the time subject to social pressure from kinsfolk and neighbours who will be affected by his decisions and who therefore try to influence them. A woman is not quite so free as a man, but she too can make many decisions for herself, and her relatives must appeal to her if they wish to influence her, for they cannot force her against her will. Man and wife living together are in a unique relationship which is personal and non-transferable, yet they live in the midst of kinsfolk and the well-being of one relative is the concern of all. The quarrels of a married couple are a danger to the cohesion of the local group in which they live, while the longer they live together, fertile and peaceful, the greater the local solidarity.

5: Allan C-5 (1941)1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Mpezeni Lamba FQ8 Maravi FR4

of mixed farming would not have solved the problem without the transfer of a considerable proportion of the people.

§. 2. *Recommendations of the Land Commission*

In 1941 a large part of the land held by the North Charterland Exploration Company in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts was acquired by Government, and in 1942 a Land Commission was appointed which included in its terms of reference the making of 'full provision for the agricultural requirements of the Natives'. This Commission recommended that some 5,600 square miles of unalienated Crown Land in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts, about 2,000 square miles in the Mkushi District and 4,800 square miles in the Ndola District, should be constituted Native Trust Land and made available for Native occupation.

§ 3. *The Problem of Resettlement*

The problem then resolved itself into making the best possible use of the additional land, and using it in such a way as to restore the population-land balance where this could be done. It was not, of course, possible, even if it had been desirable, to recreate the primary population-land pattern, but the grant of additional land gave an opportunity of creating a planned tertiary pattern to replace the arbitrary secondary pattern.

Such planning requires a detailed knowledge of the land and of the agricultural systems employed on it. Fortunately the basic knowledge had already been provided by the Ecological Survey of the Territory. The vegetation-soil method, evolved by Trapnell, provided a rapid and reliable means of land classification and, again on the basis of the work of the survey, a method of estimating approximate land carrying capacities for traditional African systems of usage was devised. Description of the vegetation-soil method of land classification will be found in the two reports of the Ecological Survey and notes on the factors involved in the estimation of land carrying capacities are given in the second of these reports.*

A complete description of the method of estimating land carrying capacities, as employed in the resettlement work, and examples of its application are given in the other papers in this series.

It is necessary to understand clearly what is meant by the terms 'land carrying capacity' and 'population-land balance', as they are used here. There is a very definite limit to the number of people any land area will support in perpetuity, if the population obtains its food only from within that area. This limit is fixed by certain natural characteristics of soil and

* *The Soils, Vegetation and Agricultural Systems of North Western Rhodesia*, Lusaka: Government Printer, 15s. *The Soil, Vegetation and Agricultural Systems of North Eastern Rhodesia*, Lusaka: Government Printer, 5s.

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Lamba FQ8
Maravi FR4

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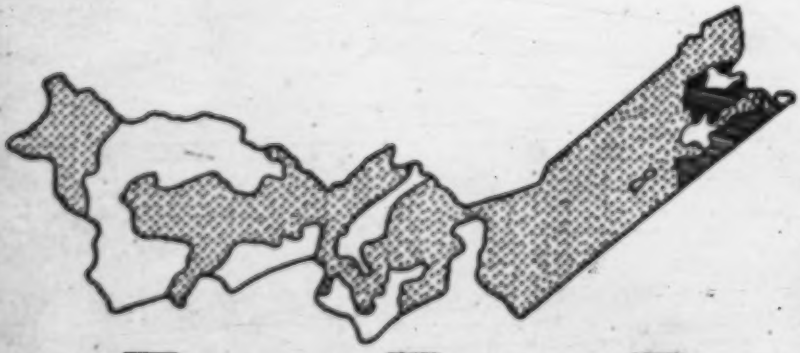
M
N
102
162
311
423
648

Crown land, Company land, alienated land and unoccupied Native Reserve. Largely uninhabited.

Land in Native occupation. Largely under-populated.

Land in Native occupation. Over-populated.

Fig 2.— THE SECONDARY POPULATION-LAND PATTERN.



Trust Land for future use of African peoples, Crown lands and alienated land.

Land in Native occupation. Balanced or under-populated.

Remaining areas of over-population, capable of supporting their populations on the basis of improved agriculture.

Fig. 3.— THE POPULATION-LAND PATTERN AFTER RESETTLEMENT.

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Other parts of the Eastern Province resettlement areas are also 'fly' country, but apparently free from sleeping sickness and it is only in the northern zone that intensive measures against tsetse have been carried out so far. The large available land area in Mkushi enabled the relatively small 'fly' areas to be avoided. This was fortunate as sleeping sickness is believed to be endemic in the western 'fly' areas of Mkushi.

The resettlement area of Ndola District was believed to contain sparse 'fly' in local pockets. Trials were made by the Agricultural and Veterinary Departments in co-operation by placing herds of cattle throughout the area and grazing them within a definite range about the kraals. Ten herds each of five beasts were used; the animals were numbered and blood slides were taken from each at frequent intervals. As a result of these trials it was found that almost the whole area was free of trypanosomyaisis and suitable for stock raising, and the small areas of 'fly' infestation were defined.

§ 6. *Method of Settlement*

Areas for resettlement were allocated to each tribe and chieftaincy in accordance with the general plan to restore the population-land balance as far as possible. Movement was, in theory at least, entirely voluntary but in many cases a good deal of persuasion was necessary to obtain the necessary number of villages. Most villages naturally preferred that their neighbour should move and that they should take over the vacated land rather than go to the trouble of moving. District Officers and Agricultural Officers held preliminary discussions with the people and the question of the villages to move into the resettlement areas was settled with the co-operation of the Native Authorities. Population counts of these villages were made, usually by District Officers.

Headmen and other representatives of the villagers who had finally elected to move then toured the area allocated to them and selected sites for the new villages. The headmen and the villagers almost invariably arranged this matter among themselves without any difficulty whatsoever. The selected sites were then marked on the Vegetation-Soil Map. Blocks of land having an estimated carrying capacity approximating to the total villages population, allowing for temporary absentees, were demarcated around the selected sites, using roads, streams, hills and cut or blazed lines as boundaries. Estimates of land carrying capacity were, of course, based on the traditional agriculture of the people concerned. This allocation of land areas for individual villages proved universally popular; the people are jealous of their boundaries and, apparently, willing to maintain them. They have usually built permanent stone beacons, to replace temporary timber structures, where the boundaries are not clearly defined by natural features.

This general method of controlled settlement was not individually applied or always possible. The great escarpment area of the Eastern Province,

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

so that anyone coming that way may see "medicine" and turn aside. After which, all bathe in the stream, and the ceremonies are over.

During a *vinyau* dance six drums are always used, namely, the *mphonje* (five or six feet in length, and beaten at one end only); the *ndewere* (another large drum three feet in length), or the *mbulule*; the *mbandambanda* and the *mtiriro* (of medium size about two feet long); and two *kambumbu* (small drums eighteen inches in length). These are beaten by men detailed by the headman or *chiwinda*; but there are no special drums appertaining exclusively to particular *mitbwala* or songs. The big village drum always belongs to the headman; the others are privately owned, and are hired out for a small fee, such as an *nsengwa* basket. Before use they are always warmed first at the fire.

4. *Property.*

Land was acquired by the Achewa by occupation and by the Angoni by conquest. It was divided by the paramount chief among his lieutenants, who in turn divided their sections among the heads of lesser groups or families. Each headman now allots land to his villagers; and if they move the village to a new site, everyone retains possession of the garden which he held before. The allottee is entitled to trees, anthoaps, honey or anything else on his plot; and he may sell crops or other produce, but may not sell or lease the land itself. When reaping his crop, he presents a basket of maize to his headman.

In the home, the wife must provide the pots, and they are her personal property. The husband must supply her with baskets, hoes, etc.; but everything which pertains to woman's work belongs to the wife. The produce of a garden is the equal property of both. After a boy has passed through his initiation, he is given a small garden of his own. When, as in the case of the Achewa, he leaves the village to marry, the garden reverts to the chief, who is always spoken of as the owner of the land, since it is he who divides it out among his people.

The majority of the cattle owners are Angoni. Possession is individual; but all the animals in one village are kept in one open kraal belonging to the village headman, who selects small boys to look after them. Herdsmen were formerly unpaid; but now, when a beast is sold, killed or otherwise removed, they receive a present from the owner, as also does the headman. There is no fixed fee; but the owner of a dozen head may give the headman a calf every other year, while the owner of one or two only gives him a goat. If a man living in a village where there is no kraal buys cattle, he frequently places them in the care of a friend at a neighbouring village where there is a kraal, instead of handing them over to his own headman. The friend makes his own arrangement with the headman; but the friend is liable to the owner, and the usual payment is made to the friend, who divides it with the headman.

If a beast dies in the kraal, there is no liability, provided that the headman (or responsible friend) informs the owner, so that the latter can make use of the meat. Should the headman or friend fail to do this, he must pay the owner a live animal of the same age and sex. Where loss occurs through the carelessness of a herdsman, a case for damages lies against him. Sometimes cows calve in the kraal, but generally they wander off into the bush for the purpose; if they are then lost, or killed by carnivora, there is no liability. If a cow sold as sound dies

conquer the Germans as they conquered us.' The Ngoni are by no means unaware of white political antagonism and questioned me closely about present day relations between English and Germans, and between English and Dutch in South Africa. Though they have seen from their own observation that modern warfare as practised by Europeans is entirely different from warfare as they knew it, they are nevertheless interested in war to-day as an 'instrument of national policy'.

It is from this angle that the Ngoni in Mpezeni's country regard the 'war' between them and the British in 1898. It was a trial of strength; they were defeated by superior power.[1] When the Ngoni tell the story of this war they make it clear that just as they had defeated the other tribes with their superior weapons, so it was British superiority in weapons which won the day, because their machine-guns were used with deadly force on the Ngoni warriors. The version of the fighting current in the villages was told me many times, always with a note of awe and horror at the unexpected and overwhelming catastrophe. When the British punitive force camped outside Mpezeni's kraal, the Ngoni war *induna* sent to ask if they were ready to fight. The reply was, 'Wait, the *Azungu* are eating'. Another later messenger brought back word that the *Azungu* had finished breakfast and were ready, and the companies sallied out, and the machine-guns were arranged facing the kraal exit. Then the Ngoni warriors sprang out, holding their shields before them, and were met by a hail of fire from the machine-guns. To their horror they found their invincible shields were no longer a protection. Many fell, the rest fled, and the huge village[2] was looted and burned. 'The *Azungu* war was too strong', is the way they invariably end this often repeated tale.

Overwhelming though this military catastrophe was, to the Ngoni it is the events preceding and following the 'war' on which they dwell, when in the villages they speak of this period of white contact. 'We are not ashamed for the war', they say, 'We are ashamed for losing our cattle and our land'. They tell to this day how a certain Carl Weise, a German, came up from Portuguese East Africa trading,[3]

[1] In the Report of Justice Maughan on the North Charterland Inquiry he says, 'It was a remarkably well-managed little war and the Ngoni accepted their defeat in good spirit like other Bantu races'.

[2] Over 3 miles across.

[3] in 1885.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

173 made friends with old Mpezeni and finally made Luangeni, Mpezeni's
648 head village, his head-quarters. He obtained mining rights in the land
[423] from Mpezeni, by word of mouth, but Mpezeni signed no deed of gift or transfer. This legal point which subsequently became one of the major points at issue in the North Charterland Company case has been emphasized again and again to me in the villages. 'Mpezeni
[491] was writing nothing. He was only giving presents to Weise, and Weise gave presents to him, and Mpezeni was saying, "You may travel in my country and dig for gold. You are my friend."' They
[648] add further, 'Mpezeni did not want to make friends with the British because he had heard from the Matabele and from Nyasaland what they were doing. Weise said "I am not from the British", and so Mpezeni was making promises with him.' So deeply is this tradition of friendship between Mpezeni and Weise, with its consequences of betrayal and disaster, embedded in the Ngoni thinking, that when I
[123] stayed in the Paramount Chief's village and exchanged presents with him, many old people shook their heads and warned the young people, 'The *Azungu* war will come again. This is how that other war was beginning.'

175 Weise failed to establish his claim to mining rights in Mpezeni's
648 territory with Sir Harry Johnston, then Commissioner for all British territories north of the Zambezi. Meantime the British South Africa Company obtained a new charter to extend its field north of the Zambezi, and sent an emissary to Mpezeni's kraal to make a treaty with him. Mpezeni refused. He also refused Sir Harry Johnston's emissary who met Weise at Mpezeni's kraal with a view to getting Mpezeni to make a treaty direct with the British Crown. The mining rights in Mpezeni's country were potentially valuable, and on Mpezeni's refusal to grant them were claimed by the British South Africa Company[1] on the ground of treaties made with the conquered Chewa people, whom Mpezeni had dispossessed.[2] Weise was at this time at Mpezeni's with one or two Portuguese traders and officials, making hay while the sun shone.

[1] 'Finding Mpezeni obdurate the British South Africa Company concluded treaties with all the surrounding indigenous chiefs whom Mpezeni had dispossessed. We consequently declined to acknowledge him as ruling chief.'

[2] F.O. 6537.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

children, but it is unusual to find more than two adults living in the same hut. These may be either man and wife, or two women who are unmarried or whose husbands are away. Adolescent boys sleep in dormitories containing a number of boys, and there are similar huts for girls. Smaller children sleep with whoever is responsible for their upbringing, parents, grandparents, or other relative, as the case may be. Children in fact sleep in a variety of huts, sometimes with their elders and sometimes with one group of playmates, sometimes with another. Polygynists divide their time between their several wives, although they may tend to keep their belongings in the hut of their chief wife. Men do not as a rule possess huts of their own apart from those of their wives.

The hut is said to belong to the man or woman living in it. There is a tendency to refer to the man as the owner if the marriage is patrilocal and to the woman if it is matrilocal, but this is not an invariable rule, and the builder of the hut, who may be living elsewhere, may be referred to as the owner. About half the dwelling huts have kitchens near by, separate huts of similar construction which are used for cooking and as sleeping-places for children and visitors. When there is no separate kitchen, cooking is done inside the dwelling hut or on the veranda.

The village, then, is a collection of buildings of different types, in which people sleep and keep their possessions, animals are sheltered, and food stored. We must now consider how the inhabitants of the village are organized.

Structure

Royal villages have names in the Ngoni language that were given by their founders. For example, there is a regal village founded by Singu, the eldest son of Mpezeni I, called Ngalaweni, meaning 'dormitory', as it was there that he put his wives. These villages are also sometimes referred to by the name of the senior queen for whom they were founded.

Most commoner villages, however, do not possess names of this type, and are known only by descent-names or by the names of individuals. These are usually the name and descent-name of the founder of the village, the man who first established the village as a separate unit. It is this individual name that is used to refer to the present headman of the village, the man recognized by the chief and the Administration as responsible for the village. This office is hereditary,

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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more industrious and usually with a view to sale of vegetables in Fort Jameson. The sites last for many years and are usually abandoned because of the removal of the owner's village to a distant place rather than because of exhaustion of the soil. 311 241

Old-village gardens are made on the site of former huts and byres, in order to take advantage of the high fertility of the soil. These gardens are not usually fenced, except when they are made on the outskirts of some existing village on the site of an old byre. Tobacco is sometimes grown, but for the most part they are cultivated in the same way as are main gardens. The site belongs to the former owner of the hut or byre, so long as the garden continues to be worked. [423]

Main gardens are made from bush clearings, and are chosen with some regard to the type and quantity of the natural vegetation. Land that has been abandoned for long enough, say twenty-five years, regains its natural cover, and if the ownership of former gardens has been forgotten, it is treated as though it were virgin woodland, that is, it is permissible for anyone who wishes to come and cultivate it. A new village site is chosen to be near, if possible, an ample amount of such regenerated land, and at the first selection of gardens the headman of the village may go round the area and see where the new gardens are being made. Gardens tend to be within 2 miles of the village, but there is no one definite area that is associated with a particular village, so that if there are a number of villages in proximity, the gardens of their inhabitants will be intermingled. A man exercises a lien on the area of uncleared land round his garden, and may take up this land himself as he enlarges his garden. Hence at first there are considerable belts of bush left between one garden and the next. With the passage of time, these are cleared, and gardens become contiguous, with boundaries between them that are almost imperceptible at first glance. At the same time as enlargements are made, the least productive parts of the gardens are neglected, so that, as the years go by, the area cultivated by one man may gradually change its position, and fresh areas of resting-land will appear between the gardens. Main gardens vary in size from about 1 to 3 acres. [423] [361] [425]

If a man moves into a village and wishes to start a garden, he is usually given part of the garden of the person to whom he is attached in the village. A son returning from the mines may be given part of his father's garden. Conversely when someone leaves the village, his garden passes to his relatives. In particular, when a man dies, his 423

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423 widows continue to cultivate the gardens they had before his death. When a man opens up a new garden he may hand over his nearly exhausted old garden to some relative who does not wish to go to the labour of clearing new ground himself. Rights in land cannot be sold, but only given away, and no presents are given to the donor by the recipient of a garden or garden site. They can only be sustained by continued residence in the locality, either by the owner of the rights himself or by his relatives. There are very few court cases concerned with rights in land, and in the courts the only attempt I saw in which a man tried to enforce what he thought to be his rights was met by the statement from the bench that no one had any rights in land, for did not all land belong to the chief?

241 Maize is planted at the beginning of the rains, and the garden is usually weeded twice over before the maize has grown high enough to surmount the weeds. When the rains end, the stalks are felled and put into large stooks to dry. The cobs are then taken off the stalks and carried back to the village to be stored. Finger millet is grown in ash-fertilized patches scattered through the main garden, and in between the maize ground-nuts, pumpkins, and other crops are grown. Sorghum, bulrush millet, and rice are also grown. Most of the work in the garden is carried on in the rainy season, and after the harvest the garden is more or less deserted until the next season, although a certain amount of new land may be cleared as a garden extension.

Dwellings outside the Village

361 There are two types of settlement outside the recognized villages that require mention. These are permanently occupied settlements consisting of two or three huts which I shall refer to as hamlets and [578] temporarily occupied huts in the gardens. The hamlets usually arise as a result of quarrels within a village that are resolved by the breaking away of one of the parties to the quarrel. The activities of the Agricul- [648] tural Department have also led to the formation of hamlets of similar size, both of hamlets of persons accepting agricultural control whose co-villagers have all moved off, and the other way about. These hamlets are all attached to proper villages for registration purposes, and participate in many of the collective activities of the villages near by.

221 The damage done to crops in the latter part of the rainy season 361 necessitates the keeping of a continuous watch, particularly at gar- [241] dens that are on the edge of a cultivated area, in order to drive off the monkeys by day and the wild pigs by night. Shelters are erected on

11:Lancaster G-5 (ca. 1935) 1937 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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migration about 1833; her burial place is unknown. She died without issue. She was the eldest daughter of Nombhengula, who was a brother of Ziwide and Sigode, and a son of Langa Vimba Nqumayo. She was a cousin to Manukusa, son of Sigode, and to Nompetu, daughter of Ziwide, who married Matshobana, the father of Mzilikazi. Sometimes it happens that a great wife or other *major* wife is not blessed with children. In these cases another woman is placed in her "house" with the object of raising seed to it. The children resulting are looked upon as children of the establishment in which their mother was "placed" and are in the same position as if born to the *major* wife; the eldest son of a chief's "Great Wife" inherits the chieftainship of the tribe on the death of his father. This was, and is, the custom of the Ngoni; it is also known to the Achewa and Anyanga Tribes. This custom is known to the Ngoni as *Nahlenze*.

Zongendaba therefore took as *Nahlenze* Sosera Nqumayo, a younger sister of Lozikazwa, and by her he had issue as follows:—Ntutu Mpezeni, the eldest son, "the Inkosana of the Indhlunkulu," Jackose, Mtwalalichi, and Ndhlobvu Makrakevu. Sosera was born about 1808 near St. Lucia Bay. She migrated with the chief and followed him through all his wanderings until his death, after which she accompanied her son, and heir, Ntutu Mpezeni, into what is now the Fort Jameson district. There she settled in her village called "Dingeni," where she died in 1900 and was buried near the site of the old village of Mtengaleni Uka Sosera close to the Kakolo stream; her grave is now marked by an euphorbia tree. The site is on the farm owned by Major Jefferies, O.B.E., which prior to the invasion of the Ngoni used to be the land of the Achewa chief, Kampers.

Sosera is well remembered by many natives who are living to-day, and although she died at a great age it is said that she was in possession of her full faculties until the last. She is described as being a real chieftainess and it is said that in later years if annoyed by the younger generation she would lay about her with her *nchiza* (staff) in a lusty manner. Many amusing tales are told of her astuteness and dry humour.

After Zongendaba's death, Sosera chose for a very beautiful woman, named Nthonane, who was a young sister-wife to the house and who had borne no children, one, Sawasa Mazamba, as a good mixer, for which he received twenty head of cattle. A daughter was born and named Ndawiri Juwe; she now resides in the Fort Manning District of Nyasaland and from her this information was obtained. Ndawiri looked upon Ntutu Mpezeni as her brother, and Ndawiri was, and is, looked upon as one of Zongendaba's children. She married Ndawombi, since dead, and has one son, Ndawombi Hara.

It is agreed by the old indunas that Ntutu Mpezeni would have been about nine years of age when he crossed over the Zambesi, that he was carried across as befitted a Paramount Chief's heir, that, prior to the crossing, Zongendaba had given him a little shield and an assegai, and that he had killed his first duiker buck before the crossing. This is also borne out by the sons of Zimakazi Lava Ngoma and Ngondo Mhawa, both of whose fathers were set the task of being servants to the chief's heir in his youth.

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Clan names, however, are inherited from the father in most Ngoni families. These names are used as surnames for the purposes of the Administration, and as forms of polite address. On marriage, a man and wife may live in either the village of the man or of the woman, although the custom whereby initially they should live in the village of the woman for a few years is still followed by some.

III

In the village there are dwelling huts, storehouses, pens for the small animals, drying platforms, and cattle byres. The huts are often arranged in rather uneven parallel lines, with all the huts facing the same way. The fences found in other parts of the country enclosing a small courtyard round the hut, are not often seen here. Each married woman has her own hut, and possibly a smaller hut as well, used as a kitchen and sleeping place for visitors and children. Unmarried adolescents of one sex sleep together in modest huts they have built for themselves or else in a hut left empty by a former resident. Where bamboos are available, as in the north and east of the area, they are used to form the framework of a circular hut. The walls are made in two concentric circles, with mud plastered on the inside of the inner circle, but with the outer circle often left unmudded. The walls are made in unbroken circles, doorways being cut out later with an axe. The space between the two circles is used for storing pots and other household goods and is sometimes used for cooking. The bamboos are woven together, split bamboos going horizontally and unsplit ones vertically, so that light is able to pass through the unplastered wall. Open lattice fencing is also found forming part of the outer wall.

Where bamboos are not available, either circular or rectangular huts of poles and mud are made. Rectangular huts are often subdivided with a partition wall, to make a separate sleeping place, while the veranda may be partly walled in to make a cooking shelter protected from the weather. With both bamboo and pole huts, the

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417 Byres for the cattle are placed on the edge of the village, with a separate division for calves at the side of the main byre. The robustness with which the byre is built depends on the extent to which [136] there are marauding animals, particularly hyenas, leopards and lions in the vicinity. The usual method of construction is using poles some ten to twenty feet long, placed close together in a circle of about twenty to twenty-five feet in diameter. Thorn branches are placed on the outside of the fence, and the gate is a simple affair of several upright poles leaning in a slot made by two cross-poles. If an anthill is available, the byre will be made round it, so that the cattle may to some extent be able to clamber up out of the mud, which in the wet season may come up to their bellies. The building of a byre is undertaken by the men who will keep their cattle in it, and when a village moves to a new site, this is the first job to be tackled. Each owner of seven or eight head of cattle may have his [403] own byre, but a man with many cattle may share a byre with his brothers. Owners of one or two head keep their cattle with their relatives.

231 /7/ Small domestic animals, such as pigs, goats, sheep and chickens, are kept in the village, near the hut of their owner, and their pens are provided with roofs and sometimes a fence as well, for [136] protection against hyenas. Deserted dwelling huts, whose owners have gone away or have died, are used as shelters for calves and other animals.

417 Drying platforms are built to provide a stand for reed mats on [285] which flour can be dried in the sun. If no platform has been built, [251] the mats are placed on the ground where the flour is at the mercy of straying animals. Pigeon houses are built on platforms about six 235 feet off the ground, with small holes to allow entry for the pigeons. Chicken houses are also sometimes built in this way, with a ladder to enable the chicken to ascend. The more prosperous villagers may 343 have other buildings, such as latrines, washing shelters, or occasional- [511] ly open-sided shelters for sitting in and gossiping.